

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07
L-03 ACDA-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02
TRSE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 DLOS-06
SAL-01 /073 W

-----241603Z 079466 /50

O R 241457Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9682
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
CINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
USDOCOSOUTH
CINCUSAFE
USNMR SHAPE
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 2710

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, TU, GR
SUBJECT: TURKISH MILITARY EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN

REF: ATHENS 2658

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: THE TURKISH AIR AND NAVAL EXERCISES
IN THE AEGEAN WERE CLEARLY A SECONDARY STORY IN THE GREEK
PRESS TODAY (MARCH 24). THE GENERAL THEME WAS THAT THE
TURKISH EXERCISES CONTINUED IN THE AEGEAN YESTERDAY ON A
RATHER LIMITED SCALE AND WITHOUT ANY VIOLATIONS OF
GREEK AIRSPACE OR TERRITORIAL WATERS. MEANWHILE, PRESS
ACCOUNTS INDICATE, THE GREEK NAVAL EXERCISES IN THE WESTERN
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AEGEAN OFF THE COAST OF THE PELOPONNESUS HAVE ENTERED THEIR
FINAL PHASE (AND, IN FACT, ARE SCHEDULED TO CONCLUDE
TODAY). END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS ACTING DIRECTOR FOR TURKISH AND CYPRIOT AFFAIRS, DIMITRI
MACRIS, CONFIRMED TO US TODAY DURING A CALL ON OTHER

MATTERS THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO VIOLATIONS OF GREEK AIRSPACE OR TERRITORIAL WATERS DURING THE FIRST THREE-DAYS OF THE TURKISH EXERCISES. HOWEVER, HE SAID, ABOUT FIVE VIOLATIONS OF THE TERRITORIAL WATERS SURROUNDING GREEK ISLANDS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THE AEGEAN THIS MORNING, INVOLVING INTRUSIONS OF UP TO THREE MILES. AS SOON AS THE TURKISH VESSELS CONCERNED WERE WARNED OF THEIR VIOLATION, THEY HAD WITHDRAWN. THE MFA OFFICIAL EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THIS DEVELOPMENT BUT INDICATED THE GOG PLANNED NO ACTION FOR THE MOMENT.

3. MACRIS SAID THAT THE GOG WAS PUZZLED OVER THE MANNER IN WHICH THE TURKS WERE CONDUCTING THESE EXERCISES. THE INITIAL TURKISH NOTAM REQUESTS HAD INDICATED THAT EXTENSIVE AIR AND NAVAL MANEUVERS WERE TO BE CONDUCTED OVER EXTENDED AREAS OF THE AEGEAN, INVOLVING CONSIDERABLE USE OF LIVE AMMUNITION. DURING THE FIRST THREE DAYS OF THE EXERCISES, HE SAID, THERE HAD BEEN VERY LITTLE AIR ACTIVITY. AND ALTHOUGH NAVAL UNITS WERE PRESENT IN THE VARIOUS EXERCISE AREAS, THERE HAD BEEN NO LIVE FIRING AND THE SHIPS WERE ENGAGED PRIMARILY IN CIRCLING MANEUVERS. THUS, THE GOG TENDED TO CONCLUDE THAT THE TURKISH OBJECTIVE IN HOLDING THE EXERCISES AT THIS TIME WAS POLITICAL AND NOT MILITARY.

4. COMMENT: TOMORROW IS, OF COURSE, GREEK NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY. WE CANNOT EXCLUDE THAT THE VIOLATIONS OF GREEK TERRITORIAL WATERS DESCRIBED ABOVE WILL NOT BE BIG HEADLINES. END CONFIDENTIAL.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, MILITARY EXERCISES, AEGEAN, TERRITORIAL WATERS VIOLATIONS, AIRSPACE VIOLATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ATHENS02710
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770101-0316
Format: TEL
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770328/aaaaayae.tel
Line Count: 89
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 015020b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ATHENS 2658
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3014149
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TURKISH MILITARY EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN
TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, TU, GR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/015020b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009